

Book Reviews

I Respectfully Dissent: A Biography of Edward H. Nakamura. By Tom Coffman. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012. Illustrated. Notes. Index. \$14.99 paper

Local author Tom Coffman faced two daunting challenges writing a biography on Edward H. Nakamura, former labor lawyer for the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and Hawai'i Supreme Court justice. First, "Nakamura had cleaned out his own files" prior to his death; second, being tasked with the job of writing his biography by his family members and friends.¹ Subsequently, Coffman relied upon Nakamura's published writings, public speeches, and interviews conducted before his death and interviewed a number of Nakamura's family members, friends, and professional acquaintances for insight. Thus, while grounding Nakamura's story in the ascension of the nisei generation in Hawai'i, Coffman offers an unflinchingly positive portrayal of Nakamura who was critical in Hawai'i's labor issues and later involved in controversies about the Hawai'i State Retirement System, Supreme Court appointment procedures, and the Bishop Estate.

Coffman's book can be divided into four parts. The first two chapters detail Nakamura's family background and his personal transformation as a nisei soldier in World War II. The subsequent three chapters trace his path as a student at the University of Hawai'i to the University of Chicago Law School where "students were encouraged to think not only about the specifics of law but also about the social and economic context in which laws are enacted."² The education and training he received would ultimately prepare him for his work as a lawyer for the ILWU where he played a central role in establishing universal health care, temporary disability insurance, and collective bargaining rights for public workers among other revolutionary legislative reforms. Following his tenure as the first member of the Board of Regents at the University of Hawai'i from the organized labor movement, Nakamura was appointed as a justice of the Hawai'i Supreme Court, which is the focus of chapters six and seven. At sixty-six years of age, Nakamura retired from

the court and in the last section of the book, Coffman describes how Nakamura became the “public’s conscience,” as he fought against the mismanagement of the Employee Retirement System, led the protest against controversial Hawai‘i Supreme Court nominee Sharon Himeno, and helped to fight against the corruption within Bishop Estate. In 1997, at the age of seventy-four, Nakamura passed away after open-heart surgery before witnessing the culmination of the goals of his retirement. Fifteen years after his death, his story and activism is finally coming to light in Coffman’s book.

Like many nisei of this period, Nakamura’s achievements are all the more remarkable as the Territory of Hawai‘i was transformed from a “colonial society,” where ethnics were excluded from political and economic opportunities, to a place where the son of Japanese immigrants could foreseeably be appointed as a Supreme Court justice.³ Both directly and indirectly, Nakamura became involved in the political changes of the period as his “broad concern for the well-being of all workers” as a labor lawyer soon translated into his political activism.⁴ Yet Nakamura’s desires likely could not have been achieved without the placement and efforts of other nisei veterans in prominent positions throughout society at this time, and like many nisei biographies, the organization and mobilization of the Democratic Party political machinery throughout Hawai‘i that resulted in the ascension of these individuals is not critically analyzed. While individuals like Nakamura may have been the right people appointed to particular positions, the Democratic Party also bred corruption and cronyism in top judicial and economic appointments that Nakamura himself later fought against during his retirement. As Nakamura passed away before the writing of this book, and his friends and family members could only provide insight into his “modest and self-effacing” character, one can only wonder what Nakamura himself personally thought about the state of Hawai‘i’s politics and economics.⁵ Through Nakamura’s labor and political experience and connections, Coffman’s book offers insight into the close connections that existed between both areas addressing in part the connections that resulted in the rise of nisei in Hawai‘i.

Kelli Y. Nakamura
Instructor, Arts and Humanities
Kapi‘olani Community College

NOTES

¹ Tom Coffman, *I Respectfully Dissent: A Biography of Edward H. Nakamura* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2012), 138, xi.

² Coffman, 32.

³ Coffman, 1.

⁴ Coffman, 69.

⁵ Coffman, 137.

The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers: A Multiethnic Baseball Team Tours the Mainland, 1912–1916. By Joel S. Franks. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2012. viii + 254 pp. Illustrated. Notes. Bibliography. Index. \$29.95 paper.

In the spring of 1912, a team of ethnically Chinese Hawaiian baseball players embarked upon the first of five annual barnstorming tours of the mainland United States. Playing under auspices of the “Chinese University of Hawaii” (p. 111), an institution that existed only in the team’s promotional material, the Hawaiian Travelers took on university teams, semi-professional outfits—African-American as well as white—and even a few professional nines throughout the continental U.S. They also made forays into East Asia and Cuba. Exhaustively researched, *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers: A Multiethnic Baseball Team Tours the Mainland, 1912–1916* tells the story of this aggregation, which became increasingly diverse each time it ventured forth from Honolulu.

Author Joel S. Franks offers context for his encyclopedic chronicle of the Travelers’ tours in the Introduction. Citing the *Evening Banner* from Bennington, Vermont, a source to which Franks repeatedly refers, he notes that the team, backed as it was by Chinese merchants from Hawai‘i, represented “the modern, even revolutionary changes, transforming China in the early decades of the twentieth century,” and that the players, though Hawai‘i-born, and hence, U.S. citizens, “reputedly supported the revolution which they hoped would disperse republican institutions throughout China” (p. 6). Despite the characterization of the Travelers by the *Evening Banner* as one propelled by a sense of social conscience, the purpose of the team seems to have been first and foremost to make money, serving all the while to publicize Hawai‘i. In contrast, press reception of the Travelers indicates that the consequences of the tours were farther reaching. The author examines the notion that “identity on the American mainland as well as Hawai‘i was more fluid than fixed and perhaps often a product of the need to sell newspapers, promote tourism, extol colonialism, firm up a racial hierarchy and occasionally chip away at it” (p. 10).

Following the Introduction, which also includes a concise discussion of

late nineteenth century Hawai'i, the racial politics of baseball, and a very brief section of the sport as a business, *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers* goes on to catalog virtually every game played by the outfit over its five year tenure, quoting directly from the predominately small-town newspapers that covered the team. Piloted by manager/promoter Sam Hop, the Travelers fielded players such as Lai Tin, Apau Kau, and Lang Akana, all of whom, Franks suggests, would have had careers in organized baseball but for racial and ethnic prejudice. These Chinese-Hawaiian players were accompanied by *haole* players, Bill Inman and Roy Doty, as well as a Japanese outfielder, Andy Yamashiro, among others, especially on the later tours. The team, which was reasonably successful, was often treated in a relatively straightforward manner in the news sources that Franks quotes repeatedly. But even more frequently, the team was referred to with sobriquets ranging from the Mongolians and Chinks to the Yellow Peril. On more than one occasion, players were assumed by the press, albeit with tongue in cheek, to be taking a break from laundry work and making chop suey. More disturbingly, certain players were subjected to more direct discrimination. In 1914, for example, some team members, according to Franks, "turned up in a bit of a jam" (p. 99), having been detained at Angel Island, the facility in San Francisco Bay constructed expressly to detain Chinese immigrants, though they were all citizens of the United States. Unfortunately, this incident receives no more attention in the work than the following week's West Coast contests.

Herein lies the work's biggest problem. Rather than offer much analysis of news sources, *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers* is little more than a list of games, accompanied by a quote or two from local newspapers. Indeed, paragraph after paragraph begins "On July 4, the Hawaiian contingent was scheduled to play a strong semi-pro nine . . ."; "On July 5, the Travelers were in Brooklyn to confront the Bushwicks . . ." (p. 112), and so forth. Choppy and repetitive, the catalog of games may be of some interest to devoted baseball historians, but for its lack of box scores. But as Hawaiian history and as a history of Hawai'i residents on the mainland, it has less to offer than its introduction promises. This is particularly unfortunate given the wealth of information uncovered by the author.

Despite its many shortcomings, *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers* is clearly written and accessible, though prone to repetition. It offers a window on the world of novelty barnstorming teams by introducing a new cast of characters to a narrative dominated by African-American outfits such as the Ethiopian Clowns and Zulu Cannibal Giants. Though occasionally players made their names seem more "Chinese" than they were, in fact, the Travelers never resorted to the type of minstrelsy associated with these barnstorming teams,

though the Hawai'i barnstormers, like the African-American barnstormers, were forced to do business with powerful white booking agents, most notably the much reviled Nat Strong, who controlled access to semi-professional games in the New York City area. Had *The Barnstorming Hawaiian Travelers* paid closer attention to these and similar connections, at the same time offering more cogent analysis of coverage by papers such as the Bennington *Evening Banner*, Franks' book might have contributed far more to the literature dealing with both Hawai'i's sport history and the business, practice, and realities of barnstorming in the early twentieth century.

Roberta Newman
Master Teacher of Humanities
Liberal Studies and Global Liberal Studies
New York University

Aloha America: Hula Circuits Through the U.S. Empire. By Adria L. Imada. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012. Notes. Glossary. Bibliography. Illustrated. Index. \$24.95 paper; \$89.95 cloth

Cultural studies scholars have enriched the theorization of the tactics that colonial subjects use to navigate the cultural and political terrains of domination. In *Aloha America*, Adria L. Imada offers a nuanced and detailed study of how hula performers from Hawai'i negotiated the objectifying gaze of audiences ranging from visitors to the royal court, paying customers at mass spectacles such as world's fairs and vaudeville stages, middle-brow supper clubs, and military lū'au. Imada argues that the hula was performed in circuits that naturalized colonialism through the trope of hospitality and came to be the ultimate metonym of the eroticized, gendered, and racialized relationship between the islands and the United States. Performing consent through what Imada calls the "stagecraft of imperial hospitality," hula dancers contributed to an imperial choreography that foregrounded love and assimilation rather than conflict and theft (p. 11). While framing these dancers as people whose choices and material lives were constrained by the U.S. colonization of the sovereign kingdom of Hawai'i, and whose performances contributed to softening the image of U.S. military occupation and colonialism, Imada also expands our understanding of these dancers as men and women who took advantage of what she calls the "cultural and economic opportunity struc-

ture” of hula to fulfill their own desires, perform “counter-colonial” politics, and sustain community and cultural practices (pp. 4, 17).

Imada’s analysis of the gendered micropolitics of hula performance complicates indigenous feminist Haunani-Kay Trask’s characterization of Native Hawaiians who participate in the tourism industry as prostitutes.¹ Indeed, she examines how this accusation has historical precedent in her first two chapters, which focus on hula before the emergence of early tourism in the 1920s and 1930s. Relating the story of an adventurous and cosmopolitan young Hawaiian commoner woman, who was both a dancer in the court of King Kalākaua and who then toured the continent, Imada suggests that hula offered opportunities for travel, occupational paid advancement (important in a changing economic system) and cultural capital as well as a way to contribute to a nationalist project through rigorous training in the protocol and repertoire of hula that made them embodiments of genealogy and history. The book’s last chapter on how hula was conscripted in the project of entertaining the troops during World War II also deflects this criticism of prostitution, even as hula girls came to symbolize the more G-rated equivalent of sex workers to visiting soldiers. Examining military footage of lū‘au entertainment, Imada notes that staging the tropical fantasy of hospitality was a failure during the war, when the details of military occupation and racism refused to stay out of the frame.

Organized in a rough chronology, *Aloha America* charts the shifts in the meaning of hula and the various spaces hula was staged alongside the changing needs of U.S. colonialism in Hawai‘i. Its most compelling contribution, however, is in the archival and interview work that Imada conducted, which shines through in her detailed portrayals of the women hula dancers and the men in the band who operated as hula “impresarios.” In her third chapter, Imada focuses on how the male band leaders became cultural brokers as they took their troupes across Europe and the United States. This experience lent itself to a kind of training for their entry into political life. In contrast, the women who toured had fewer such opportunities, though some of them were able to parlay their experiences on the hula circuits into careers onstage and off. The book fills a historical gap in its depictions of the gendered labor and performances of the decades around the 1900s, but goes beyond that to also illuminate the off-stage lives of these dancers. Throughout her book, Imada gives evidence of the kinds of communities these performers assembled—a kind of inalienable aloha that sustained them in through the physical and emotional hardships of touring. Imada writes in a clear and engaging style, breaking down the theoretical concepts she draws from in concise and digestible fashion. The illustrations she includes in the book complement the story

she tells, and further humanize the dancers and musicians who participated in these hula circuits.

Vernadette V. Gonzalez
Assistant Professor of American Studies
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa

NOTES

- ¹ See Haunani-Kay Trask's characterization in *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).

The Role of the American Board in the World: Bicentennial Reflections on the Organization's Missionary Work, 1810–2010. Edited by Clifford Putney and Paul T. Burlin. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2012. xxx + 349pp. Bibliography. Illustrated. Index. \$42.00 paper

In 2010, the bicentennial year of the American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (ABCFM), a small group of scholars convened at the Congregational Library in Boston to mark the occasion. *The Role of the American Board in the World: Bicentennial Reflections on the Organization's Missionary Work, 1810–2010* grew out of that conference. In an introductory chapter, the volume's co-editor Clifford Putney argues that "the ABCFM played a highly important role in U.S. and world affairs" (p. xxvi). Yet while scholars who participated in the conference—and those who contributed essays to the volume—are doubtless convinced of the ABCFM's historical and global significance, little has been written on the topic. Moreover, Putney writes, some of the existing scholarship has lacked the kind of "nuance" that allows for a full understanding of this complicated and historically important organization and the diverse group who labored under its direction. The essays in this volume are thus intended to describe the ABCFM's global reach while also complicating what we know about the Board and its missionaries. On balance, *The Role of the American Board in the World* achieves both aims, and perhaps even more successful with regards to the latter than the former.

With the exception of the first two chapters, which are designed to provide context for the ABCFM's foundation and some of its later struggles, this edited volume offers a largely geographical organization. Of the book's

fifteen chapters, six focus on missions to Asia, five explore the Hawaiian Islands missions, one chapter examines a missionary's work in Angola, and an additional chapter focuses on missionary labor in Spain. Yet the editors have also ably connected these essays thematically. The latter two chapters, for example, explore the significant role women came to play in the foreign mission movement. A co-authored essay by Ann Ellis Pullen and Sarah Ruffing Robbins examines the work of Nellie J. Arnott, a mission teacher who served in Angola in the early years of the twentieth century. Pullen and Robbins argue that Arnott's service came at a moment when "single women missionaries . . . were becoming central to the enterprise" (p. 194). The authors trace "Arnott's place in the gendered ABCFM network" to explore the evolution of "women's mission culture" (pp. 195, 203). While Arnott's work for the mission allowed her to "stretch . . . middle-class gender roles" of her day, Pullen and Robbins are careful to show that Arnott was cautious never to "overturn" those roles completely.

Yet as Stephen K. Ault demonstrates, even the gender-specific roles allotted to women in the mission provided a space for them to participate in work they deemed to be meaningful. Ault's essay describes Alice Gordon Gulick's efforts to create "a center where young Spanish women could receive teaching of the very best quality"—a place she envisioned as becoming "the Mount Holyoke of Spain" (pp. 217, 220). Though the ABCFM was initially reluctant to support either Gulick or her fledgling school, the board ultimately understood that Gulick's efforts might successfully "[ease] the way for Protestantism in Spain" (p. 222). The board's support, Ault shows, cleared the way for Gulick to participate in new kinds of public activities. Indeed, Gulick's fundraising work took her "from stage to pulpit to platform" and she "became a powerful and effective speaker" on behalf of her cause (p. 222). Together, these essays suggest that the board's attitudes about women's place in the mission were complicated and often subject to change.

Similarly, essays on the mission—and its missionaries—to the Hawaiian Islands complement each other while also answering Putney's call for "nuance." Co-editor Paul Burlin's essay on the salary dispute that erupted between (and sometimes among) missionaries and the board works vigorously to interrupt the perception that it is possible to identify a "more-or-less straight line from the arrival of the First Company of ABCFM agents in 1820 . . . to the Great *Mahele*" (p. 227). While Burlin acknowledges that "many of the missionaries acquired land and other forms of wealth in the islands and . . . worked hard to impose a capitalist political economy on the Hawaiian people," he insists that missionaries vigorously disagreed on these issues (p. 227). Burlin uses the salary dispute to demonstrate the diversity of missionary opinion on the matter, and to show that missionaries' acquisition

of land was hardly as inevitable as it might seem today, nor was it uncontested within the mission.

Char Miller's essay likewise demonstrates that where missionaries agreed on some issues, they disagreed passionately over others. For example, while nineteenth century missionaries largely concurred that "Christian families . . . were the most effective means of inculcating Christian values and beliefs abroad," they did not reach an easy consensus when it came to the matter of what to do with their offspring (p. 313). Where some missionaries to Hawai'i worried that mission children raised in the islands would be "corrupted" by the surrounding culture, and advocated sending children back to the mainland to be educated, others—like mission wife Lucy Thurston—insisted on keeping their children with them. Thurston rearranged her home in such a way as to prevent the "ruination" of her children while also allowing it to remain a symbol of Western civilization (pp. 321, 326). Importantly, Miller attends not just to changes deriving from within the mission, but the role Hawaiians played "molding the contours of mission-family life" (p. 327).

This volume boasts a number of simply outstanding essays. In addition to the ones described above, essays by Timothy Mason Roberts, Hamish Ion, Regina Pfeiffer, and Jennifer Fish Kashay in particular add depth and complexity to the existing mission historiography to demonstrate that "missionaries were a diverse group of individuals with different methods and aspirations" (p. xxviii). While some of the essays might have helped readers better identify the ABCFM's role in world affairs, taken together they nevertheless highlight the global nature—and the global reach—of the board and its missionaries.

Jennifer Thigpen
Assistant Professor of History
Washington State University